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MEDICAL AID FOR COAL MINERS

A. Luganskiy

There has been criticism of medical aid for miners. However, conditions at Moscow, Tula and Rostov Oblast coal mines prove this unwarranted. In the Moscow coal field in 1946 there were 54 doctors to serve the miners; today there are 225. At the TulaUgol Medical Station there are 48 doctors instead of the 15 required by a recent decree. Also, miners at KalininUgol, BelokhovUgol, KrasnogvardeyskUgol and ShchekinUgol have access to every kind of specialized aid. The dispensary system is being improved and expanded in Rostov Oblast where some 300 specialists are available to the miners. Shney, Deputy of the Leading Oblast Public Health Department, speaks highly of young doctors studying specialized medicine in the field of mining.

In 1948, the Don region received six X-ray machines and the medico-sanitation units at Krasnodonets and Belaya Kalitva have also received some. At present there is not one polyclinic or dispensary without a physio-therapeutic section.

Medical aid is very well organized and in 87 percent of the cases the miners were able to receive medical aid within 30 minutes. The remaining 13 percent received aid within an hour. Many mines are equipped with special evacuation cars. In tunnels No 22 and 26 of the Moscow coal fields, miners work under daylight electric illumination.

At "Oktyabrskaya Revolutsiya" mine all miners are given periodic examinations to ascertain that they meet the rigid physical standards established by the Mine Dispensary.

At mine No 73, Ivanova was able to reduce the accident and morbidity rate by 22 percent in 1948.

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On the other side of the ledger, sanitation inspection teams are not doing their jobs. Conditions are poor at GundorovUgol where there is almost no medical aid. Professor Plotkin, Chief Surgeon of Moscow Oblast, noted that four fifths of the traumatic cases were miners whose physical conditions did not meet minimum physical requirements. Likewise, administration of medical services is not operating efficiently. Plans called for construction of a hospital and dispensary at the Lipowsk Combine during 1948 and this project has been delayed till 1950. Scientific research institutes and scientific practical institutes are not training students properly in problems of sanitation and hygiene and, in addition, these institutes do not aid their graduates once they are assigned to various medical units.

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